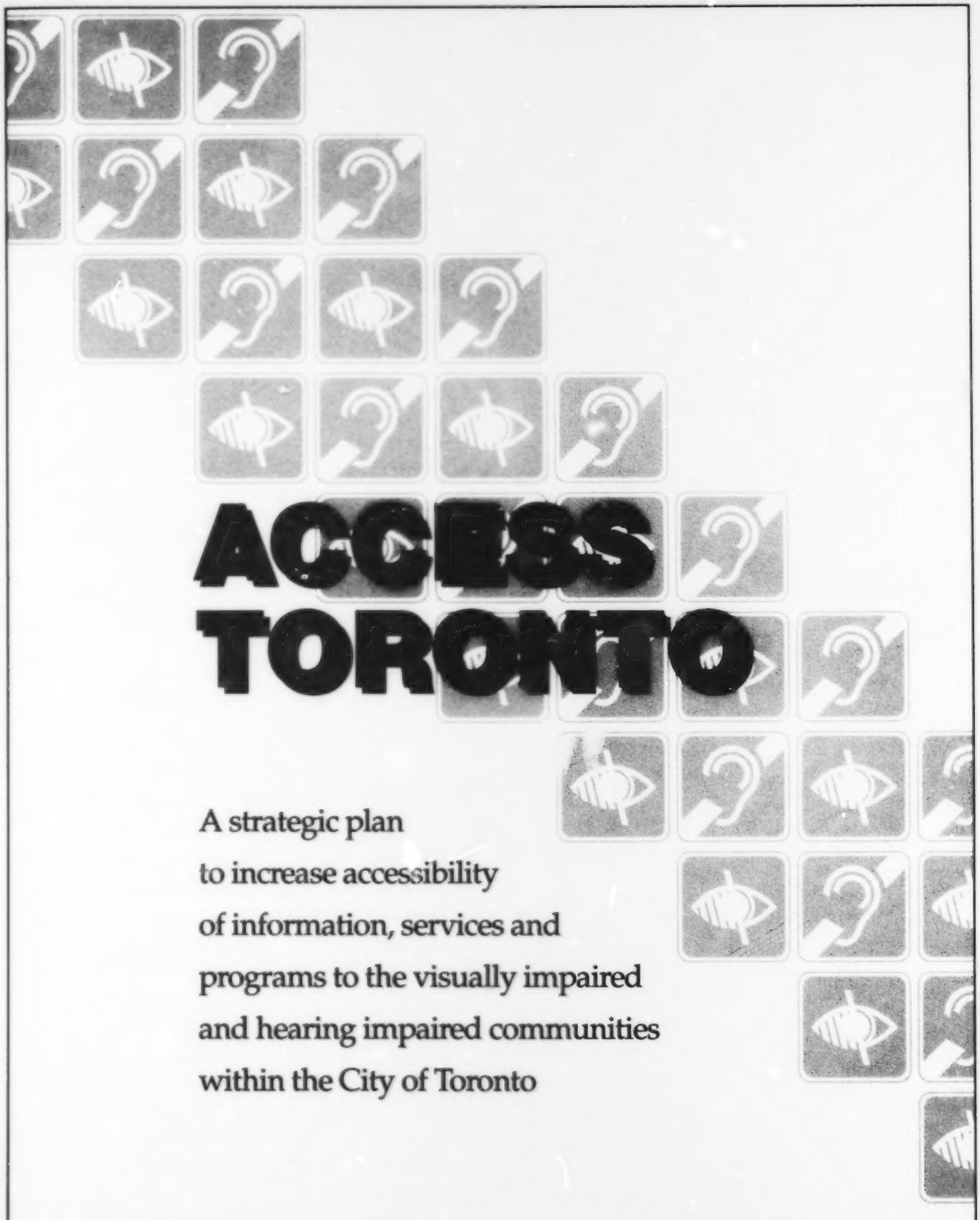

ACCESS TORONTO

A strategic plan
to increase accessibility
of information, services and
programs to the visually impaired
and hearing impaired communities
within the City of Toronto

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Prepared by
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for the

City of Toronto
Action Committee for People with Disabilities
(ACPD)

February 1990

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Design, Layout, Typesetting, Graphics by the
City of Toronto Planning and Development Department

This report is also available in large print, braille and on audio cassette.

$7.00

90-06120/l

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Executive Summary

The objective of this project was to examine the current programming offered by the City of Toronto departments and recommend a comprehensive strategy to adapt these programs to ensure that they are more accessible to blind/visually impaired and deaf/hearing impaired persons.

The procedures we followed to gather information included the following:

- a needs analysis of Toronto's visually impaired and hearing impaired communities. This consisted of interviews with a total of thirty-eight persons from both of these communities. Participants communicated opinions on the accessibility of current services and information, suggested ways to increase awareness of city services, suggested services or programs they would like to see added at City Hall, expressed environmental or way-finding concerns, discussed attitudinal problems they encountered with City Hall staff and commented on employment opportunities with the City;
- a review of current strategies used by the City to communicate with the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities. This was achieved through interviews with representatives of Toronto City Hall departments. As well, interviews with other municipalities, provincial and federal governments were conducted to determine what other governments were currently doing regarding accessibility issues; and
- research into realistic options to increase the accessibility of the City's services and programs to the visually impaired and hearing impaired. This information was collected through interviews with equipment vendors as well as interviews with City Hall representatives and members of the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities.

This report therefore, consists of a summary of findings regarding the accessibility of current programming offered by the City of Toronto departments. It addresses existing barriers that prevent people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments from fully accessing the services, programs and events provided by the City. These barriers take various forms, including:

- negative public image;
- lack of coordinated access policies and practices;
- lack of staff training on communication;
- absence of special equipment; and
- physical barriers to access (e.g., location of information desk).

The key informants interviewed for this study identified several viable options to improve access to information and services. The development of the recommendations suggested in this report was guided by the input from the key informants and was based on the principles outlined below:

- access will be best facilitated by the development and implementation of a strategic access plan;
- access must be coordinated, not piecemeal;
- options must be flexible;
- strategies to improve access must be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis; and
- hearing impaired and visually impaired individuals should be participants in the access strategy.

The recommendations suggested in this report are to be part of a comprehensive access strategy that will be implemented over a three-year period. Implementation of the system should be initiated by a well-planned, large scale public awareness effort. The recommendations suggested in this report include the following:

- establish implementation committee;
- hire a full-time access coordinator (3-year contract);
- establish central equipment coordination;
- staff training;
- development of ongoing relationships with associations for the hearing impaired and associations for the visually impaired associations;
- production of documents in large print, braille or tape on demand;
- install voice computer;
- review signage;
- relocation of information services;
- install TDD [1] machines for all enquiry lines;
- use TDD numbers and ear symbol along with telephone numbers;
- purchase assistive listening systems;
- hire a full-time sign language interpreter;
- install TDD pay telephone;
- review reading level of printed material; and
- ongoing assessment and modification.

The City's commitment to improving access for the hearing impaired and visually impaired communities was the impetus for this study. The implementation of these recommendations will ensure improved access to all of the services provided by the City of Toronto.

[1] Telecommunications Device for the Deaf.

The Study

Removing barriers for disabled people and ensuring access to facilities and services have been a long-standing policy of the City of Toronto. The focus has mainly been on providing access to those with physical/mobility disabilities, and over the past ten years, the City has made great efforts in removing many of the physical barriers (through, for example, a variety of retrofit activities).

The Interdepartmental Committee on the Disabled was established by City Council in 1984 to provide a means for City departments to address the needs of people with disabilities. With the dissolution of the Task Force on the Disabled and Elderly, the Interdepartmental Committee's mandate was to monitor the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations, report on City activities affecting persons with disabilities, provide a forum for departments to share information and communicate to the public about accessible municipal services.

In June 1988, the Interdepartmental Committee reviewed its 1984 Terms of Reference to see if they were still appropriate. There was a concern that the Committee's approach to disability issues needed updating.

The Committee's approach had emphasized information sharing and disability awareness as the basis for encouraging actions by departments. However, changes in public policies affecting people with disabilities now require that the Committee be more active in implementing strategies which result in a more accessible City. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and provisions in the Ontario Human Rights Code suggest much stronger obligations on the City's part to ensure access and reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities to municipal facilities, services and employment.

It was decided to revise the mission statement to affirm the shift in direction which the Action Committee has taken in the last two years. It more accurately reflects the Committee's current situation than the 1984 Terms of Reference.

The mission statement of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Disabled is as follows:

> *"To lead the City of Toronto's effort to be accessible for people with disabilities by the year 2000."*[2]

The name was also changed to the Action Committee for People with Disabilities (ACPD)

The specific roles of the committee include the following:

- to provide a forum for informed discussion and action by departments on matters affecting people with disabilities in Toronto;
- to provide a source of information for departments on the needs of people with disabilities;
- to develop and implement policies and programs for responding to the needs of people with disabilities;
- to review and evaluate City activities regarding people with disabilities;
- to influence the development of policies and services for people with disabilities and to report on the implications for action by City departments;
- to increase public knowledge of the needs of people with disabilities and of City initiatives that respond to these needs;
- to recommend approval of funds for retrofitting City buildings to facilitate accessibility; and
- to provide incentives for innovative initiatives to assist people with disabilities.

Over the last number of years, the ACPD has recognized the need to broaden the concept of increased accessibility to include communication accessibility for populations such as the blind/visually impaired and the deaf/hearing impaired who face significant difficulties in terms of access to city information, programs and services.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the current programming offered by the City of Toronto departments and recommend a comprehensive strategy to adapt these programs so that they are more accessible to visually impaired and hearing impaired persons.

The scope encompassed a needs analysis of Toronto's visually impaired and hearing impaired communities, a review of current strategies used by the City to communicate with these communities and research into viable options to increase the accessibility of the City's services and programs to people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments. Interviews were conducted with 38 members of the visually impaired and hearing impaired populations as well as with representatives of City departments, other municipalities, provincial and federal governments, and equipment vendors. In addition, participant observation methods were used to gain subjective information on service accessibility.

[2] Accessible refers to the ability to use or obtain the benefit of goods and services including: accommodation, health and social services, the physical environment, transportation, public facilities, employment, information and communications.

This report presents the findings of the study, along with specific recommendations for improving the accessibility of the City's programs and services.

1.1 The Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired Communities

The focus of this study was on the barriers present in City government that prevent the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities from fully accessing and participating in the services of the City of Toronto. It was decided to study these two groups together because their respective disabilities affect their use of the traditional communication channels used by municipal governments. They also share the common feature that their impairments are less apparent to the public than other physical disabilities. Throughout the study, however, the unique needs of the two communities were constantly acknowledged.

People with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments are diverse communities with a wide range of impairments. The study examined barriers to access that affect individuals who have either mild or severe impairments.

The hearing impaired population includes individuals with mild hearing loss, who cope with the assistance of hearing aids and other amplification devices, as well as individuals who are profoundly deaf and rely on sign language and/or lip reading to communicate.

The visually impaired population ranges from individuals with minimal sight who are able to read large print, see colours and navigate unaided, to individuals who are completely blind and must use braille or audio tape to access materials that are usually printed.

1.2 Size of the Communities

For the purpose of planning access strategies, it is useful to know the size of the target communities. The size of the population should not, however, detract from the moral and legal imperative to provide equal access to services.

A recent national study of the incidence of disabilities in Canada estimates that 13.9 percent of people in Ontario have at least one impairment.[3] Of these, 18 percent have problems with vision and 29 percent have problems with their hearing. The numbers increase dramatically with age. Over 45 percent of disabled individuals 65 and older in Ontario report problems with their hearing. Estimates for Toronto were developed by extrapolating from Ontario data using the City of Toronto population as a base. The estimated number of visually impaired adults is approximately 15,000 and the number of hearing impaired adults is 24,000.

[3] National Data Survey, Statistics Canada

1.3 Human Rights

The Ontario Human Rights Code stipulates that people who are disabled have a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods, facilities, accommodation, contracts and employment.

Recent amendments to the Code have brought renewed attention to the rights of persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities must be provided reasonable accommodation on the job assuming they can perform the essential duties. A policy, practice or procedure that on the face of it appears neutral but results in the exclusion or restriction of a group of people, otherwise protected by the legislation constitutes discrimination unless it is bona fide in the circumstances or explicitly stated elsewhere in the statute.

The responsibility for providing access to buildings, services and programs now clearly belongs to the employer, landlord or provider of services.

1.4 Framework for the Study

A conceptual framework was developed to explain the various barriers to access encountered by people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments. The barriers are largely associated with problems of communication. The framework describes the process that an individual must go through to gain access to information and services provided by the City. The framework includes four stages:

- awareness;
- information seeking;
- physical access; and
- in-person communication.

The premise of the first stage, awareness, is that individuals must first become aware that a service, program or event is available. If they are unaware of a service, they are unlikely to use it. Individuals traditionally find out about services through advertisements, news reports, word of mouth or direct contact with the municipality, (e.g., property taxes, post natal public health nurse visit). Once aware, a person must decide if he/she has any need for the service.

If an individual is interested in the service, program or event, he/she usually requires more information than is initially available at the awareness stage. In the information seeking stage, people will often telephone the municipality for additional oral information and often request printed materials which provide more in-depth explanations.

In some cases, an individual will want to meet with a representative from the City, or attend a meeting or event. The third stage, physical access focuses on the barriers people may encounter getting to and around City buildings.

Upon reaching their destination, people will want to communicate, either by observing, participating in a meeting or event, or on a one to one basis with a representative of the City. At this fourth stage, the individual wants to directly access or use the service by means of direct in-person communication.

This conceptual framework is useful because it presents access as a process and highlights the various barriers encountered by people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments at each stage. It allows potential recommendations to be evaluated based on their impact at each of the four stages. The framework also shows that the visually impaired and hearing impaired often encounter different types of access problems at each stage. In the following sections of this report, the framework will be used as the basis for analyzing the information obtained during the study.

Current Access Strategies used by the City of Toronto

In this section, the current strategies used by City departments to provide access are reviewed. Interviews were conducted with 24 representatives from 10 departments. In most cases, senior level employees were selected from departments that have frequent contact with the public. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain the measures taken by each department to increase accessibility. A list of the departments and divisions that contributed information can be found in Appendix 1.

The knowledge and awareness of the access problems encountered by the visually impaired and/or hearing impaired communities varied across departments. Individuals in departments with little public contact were less aware than individuals with frequent contact. Overall, there was a deep commitment on the part of all department representatives to facilitate improved access. Many acknowledged that they were unaware of the steps required to improve access. Staff of the Department of Public Health were a noticeable exception. They are presently developing their own plan to improve access to services and programs for people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments.

There is a sense that many departments are in a "double bind" situation regarding the extent to which they should make their services accessible. No department representative interviewed could recall more than one or two situations involving a visually impaired or hearing impaired person accessing their services. Departments are unclear about the true level of demand for access from members of these communities. It was acknowledged in the interviews that the apparent lack of demand may be because many of the services are presently inaccessible to people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments. In fact, interviews with members of the communities indicated that they often do not seek services from the City because access is too difficult.

2.1 Awareness

Most departments that provide public services have strategies to make the public aware of those services. The common approach across all departments is to use printed materials. These include:

- advertisements in newspapers;
- bus shelter posters;
- brochures;
- flyers delivered to homes;
- direct mail;
- billboards; and
- Metron (electronic advertisements in subway).

In terms of the framework, these strategies are adequate for people with hearing impairments but inadequate for reaching the visually impaired community. The Information and Communication Services Division of the City Clerk's Department does send press releases to various associations that have contact with the target communities. Some use is also made of television and radio.

2.2 Information Seeking

There is general agreement across departments that the majority of their public contact is over the telephone. Telephone contacts usually end in one of three ways:

- information is provided;
- written materials are requested and sent; and/or
- a meeting is arranged.

The telephone contact presents a barrier to most hearing impaired persons. At present, there are a few telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDD) operating at City Hall. These TDDs are used by hearing or speech impaired persons to communicate via telephone with certain departments. However, the presence of these TDDs does not effectively remove the barriers. Current problems observed during the study include:

- staff using TDDs are not provided adequate training;
- TDDs are not part of an overall access strategy;
- TDD telephone numbers are not consistently placed on printed materials;
- TDDs are not always hooked up to public enquiry lines; and
- TDD telephone numbers have not been made known to the hearing impaired population.

Most department representatives were unaware of the Bell Relay System.[4] This service consists of Bell Canada operators who act as the link between hearing individuals and hearing impaired individuals. Those who had used the system reported that it provided an effective means of communication. Some concerns were expressed that confidential matters such as those commonly discussed by Public Health employees may be hindered by the addition of a third party (the Bell Relay operator) to the conversation.

At present, the City does not provide the visually impaired community with access to most printed materials that are commonly mailed out to callers. During the interviews, department representatives were unable to prioritize which documents should be readily accessible.

Most departments felt that the majority of their public documents were of equal importance and therefore, would all require equal accessibility.

For example, the information the Department of Public Health provides on nutrition, prenatal care, AIDS and birth control are all important for their respective target groups. Information Services reported that they, on request from specific departments, had sent some materials to be brailled and taped. A list of these documents is included in Appendix 2. (Technology, outlined in Section 4 of this report could provide easy access to most documents produced by the City.)

2.3 Physical Access

All of the individuals interviewed reported that most people without any physical impairments have difficulty navigating around City Hall. Physical aspects of the building that present particular problems to people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments include:

- lack of clear signage;
- poor location of information services;
- curved walls;
- glass doors;
- lack of braille buttons and tone system in elevators; and
- unprotected open spaces such as the stairwells on Nathan Phillips Square.

2.4 In-Person Communication

Again, most department representatives were aware of only one or two encounters between people with hearing impairments and their department. There were no formal procedures in any department on how to communicate with a hearing impaired

[4] Bell Relay Telephone Numbers: Speaking 1-800-267-6600
TDD 1-800-267-6511

person. Only half of the department representatives interviewed knew that sign language interpreters could be arranged upon request. No central source of information was available to determine the number of interpreting hours purchased by the City.

In recent years, the City approved the provision of sign language interpreting at Council meetings. However, discussions with the agencies involved resulted in conflicting views on the best process to serve members of the hearing impaired community. In anticipation of further recommendations in this study, the Department of the City Clerk elected to postpone action at this time.

2.5 Summary

A strength that comes through in the interviews with City employees is their genuine commitment to the concept of access for people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments. The individuals we interviewed are prepared to support changes that will improve access. It is also apparent from these interviews that there is a general lack of knowledge on the best ways to improve access. The devices and services in place to facilitate access are hindered by:

- the lack of a comprehensive strategy;
- inadequate staff training; and
- inconsistent application of procedures (e.g., TDD numbers on advertisements).

The true measure of the City's accessibility is best found in the perceptions and experiences of the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities.

Perceptions of the Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired Communities

A key source of information in this study was the interviews conducted with key informants from the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities. The individuals were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- represented an organization or association which deals with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments;
- known to be involved in advocacy for their community;
- presented various levels of impairment; and
- representative of various education, occupation and income levels.

Our approach to the interviews was tailored according to the needs of the two groups interviewed. The interviews with people with visual impairments were conducted over the telephone by a blind interviewer. The interviews with people with hearing impairments were conducted in person by an interviewer fluent in sign language. Individuals were assured that their identities would remain confidential.

In this section the major observations of the key informants will be presented and discussed. The organizations that were consulted are listed in Appendix 3. Copies of the questionnaires used during the interviews are included in Appendix 4.

3.1 City Services Required by the Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired Communities

It is not surprising that respondents indicated that they need access to the same services as the rest of the Toronto's population. They pointed out that the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities are comprised of a diverse range of people.

Visually impaired and hearing impaired individuals have the same needs for health information, marriage licenses, building permits as well as the many other services

provided by the City. They also wish to have access to public entertainment, (events in Nathan Phillips Square) recreation and political events (access to Council meetings). Both groups listed information services, public health and emergency services as the most important City services they wished to access.

3.2 Problems With Access to City Services

The City of Toronto was reported to have an image of being inaccessible to people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments. Exhibit I lists the key concerns expressed by the respondents about the problems they have encountered accessing City services. It is important to note that both groups have highlighted their feelings that City employees are not provided adequate training to communicate with them. Respondents were concerned with the "bureaucratic run-around" and the cumbersome process of obtaining services such as interpreters. Individuals reported feeling that it was not worth the effort to try to access services from the City. Some said that they felt as if "they did not belong at City Hall."

Exhibit I
Problems Accessing City Services
(Responses from the Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired Communities)

Hearing Impaired

- staff are not trained to communicate with the hearing impaired
- assistance is needed to complete forms
- inappropriate signage
- lack of information about public events
- there are no interpreters available at City Hall/pre-authorization is cumbersome
- must have a friend/interpreter to come with us for an in-person visit
- public phones are not equipped for use by the hard of hearing, only for hearing aid users
- City Hall staff do not use the TDDs properly
- no amplification devices for one to one communication or for the council chambers
- no visual alert systems

Visually Impaired

- staff have no patience and may be patronizing
- assistance is needed to complete forms
- poor signage
- lack of information about services offered, eligibility
- most accessible by telephone as in-person service is poor
- get diverted to the CNIB, to avoid dealing with your request
- all the public information is in printed form
- information desk is not close enough to the front
- elevators are not accessible
- bureaucratic run-around when making inquiries

People with visual impairments were most concerned with the difficulty getting around City Hall, the poor location of the Information Services Section and the lack of information in forms other than regular print.

People with hearing impairments reported that the TDDs in place were not used properly by staff and therefore did not facilitate communication. They pointed out that staff need to be trained not only in the technical use of the TDDs, but also in the use of appropriate language and TDD etiquette. The hearing impaired community also noted that it was difficult to arrange for the City to approve payment for interpreters. They had to plan far in advance if they wanted to use a City service.

Several respondents indicated that the City will have to make a special effort to inform the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities of any improvements that are made to access. They also warned that new systems should be planned carefully to avoid confirming the communities' somewhat negative image of the City.

3.3 Ways for the City to Increase Awareness

The visually impaired and/or hearing impaired respondents suggested many ways for the City to increase awareness of the services and programs that are available. Many of these are listed in Exhibit II.

An important suggestion made by both groups is to use existing organizations such as the Canadian Hearing Society and the CNIB to increase awareness. Members of the communities already routinely receive information from these organizations. It was also suggested that the City develop ongoing informal relationships with the hearing impaired and visually impaired communities to foster the dissemination of information. Open houses were mentioned as a means to increase awareness and build ties.

People with hearing impairments recommended that the reading level of many printed materials should be simplified to improve understanding. It should be noted that the average reading level of a profoundly hearing impaired individual is grade four. People with visual impairments requested that radio and television be used more frequently. The key locations and sources for distributing information are summarized in Exhibits III and IV.

Exhibit II

Methods to Increase Awareness of City Services

(Responses from the Hearing Impaired and the Visually Impaired Communities)

Hearing Impaired

- printed material (flyers, posters, newsletters of deaf organizations)
- helpful staff who could communicate with hearing impaired
- TV with closed-captions
- educate adults through open houses, workshops
- keep deaf organizations informed
- direct mailings using mailing lists of deaf organizations
- educate younger children in schools
- through audiologists/hearing aid manufacturers
- move information counter to the front
- public relations staff to make presentations to deaf groups
- booklet with all the basic information about City Hall
- newspaper articles and ads

Visually Impaired

- publish information in tape, braille and large print format
- staff that would help, not divert you to CNIB.
- TV, radio (Public Service Announcement)
- seminars/open house to explain services
- keep organizations for the visually impaired informed
- CNIB, BOOST, BALANCE newslines

3.4 Improving Access to Information

People with visual impairments reported difficulties accessing the large volume of printed materials produced by the City. They recommended that documents be available upon request in large type, taped format or braille. Another alternative is to use a talking computer or reading machine to allow the visually impaired to have access to printed documents. They also requested that a list of services and documents be available in alternative formats.

Exhibit III

Best Methods for Distributing City Information
(Responses from the Hearing Impaired and the Visually Impaired Communities)

Hearing Impaired

- TV with closed-captions
- direct mail through mailing list of deaf organizations
- newspapers
- City Hall public relations staff should make presentations at deaf organizations
- hearing impaired organizations
- frequently visited public places (library, hospital, post office, TTC)
- audiologist offices/hearing aid dealers
- brochures included with tax bill (must use simple wording)

Visually Impaired

- radio, TV
- direct home mailing of information
- newspapers*
- outreach to the community
- visually impaired organizations
- frequently visited public places
- information available from City Councillors
- lobby of City Hall building (Rotunda and Information Services)

* with assistance from sighted readers

Exhibit IV

Sources used by the Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired Communities to Find Out about City Services
(Responses from the Hearing Impaired and the Visually Impaired Communities)

Hearing Impaired

- word-of-mouth
- deaf association, club or centre (BRCD, CHS, Silent Voice)
- call City Hall using TDDs or Bell Relay Service
- go in person or with someone else
- pamphlet, flyer
- same sources as hearing people
- note in tax bill

Visually Impaired

- word-of-mouth
- visually impaired association, club or centre (CNIB, BOOST)
- call the City Hall main information number or the appropriate department
- go in person
- TV, radio (Public Service Announcement)

3.5 Physical Access to City Buildings

Exhibit V presents the most common problems encountered by people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments trying to find their way in City Hall. Many of these difficulties are also experienced in other City owned buildings.

Exhibit V

Problems Finding Their Way in City Facilities

(Responses from the Hearing Impaired and the Visually Impaired Communities)

Hearing Impaired

- information office is not up front
- no maps, diagram or floor lines for directions
- poor communication skills of staff (directions confusing, don't understand deaf voices)
- no clear signage
- layout of the floor plan is confusing
- need a sign language interpreter available

Visually Impaired

- information office is not up front
- no brailled map for directions
- poor communication skills of staff
- no large print or raised lettering at eye level height (auditory signs would be helpful)
- building's curves are disorienting (no reference points; lobby is too open)
- lack of staff to act as escorts
- poor lighting
- Nathan Phillips Square is too open; large obstacles; no pathway to follow
- elevators are not brailled or voice monitored

Both groups observed that poor directions from employees often compounded the difficulty of finding their way. Directions must be specific. In many cases, particularly with people with visual impairments, it is better to provide a guide to assist the person to his/her destination. People with hearing impairments suggested that physical maps or models help them to find their way around buildings.

3.6 In-Person Communication

According to the key informants, people with hearing impairments encounter more difficulty with in-person communication. Recommendations included:

- staff training on how to communicate with a deaf person;
- hire a permanent interpreter;
- close caption city council meetings on video; and
- provide portable assistive listening systems for meetings.

Exhibit VI presents suggestions from the key informants on how City staff can improve their communications with people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments.

Exhibit VI

Items for Staff to Consider when Helping Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired People (Reported by Key Informants)

Hearing Impaired

- patience: this type of communication takes time
- realize that all deaf people are different (some lip read, some sign)
- refer to a map or diagram instead of pointing
- don't be distracted, deal only with one person at a time
- provide an escort for the hearing impaired person to the appropriate department
- the speech or hearing impairment does not affect the person's intelligence
- a hearing impaired person wants fair and equal treatment not more consideration than the general public
- eye contact/face the person
- speak slowly and clearly
- have a paper and pen handy for use if needed
- writing must be clear English, at the correct level
- don't shout
- monitor the conversation to ensure the deaf person is understanding each chunk of information
- have an interpreter on staff at the information counter.

Visually Impaired

- patience: communication may take longer
- be aware of the different degrees of impairment
- give verbal instructions/directions
- don't pass them off to someone else
- provide an escort as elevators are not brailled or voice monitored
- the visual disability does not affect the person's intelligence
- a visually impaired person wants to be treated in the same manner as a sighted person
- ask how you can help rather than assume (e.g., don't take their arm without asking)
- don't pet a guide dog as this will distract it

3.7 Summary

In addition to the information already mentioned, the respondents provided input on their involvement in the political process and on employment opportunities at City Hall. In general, they reported that most of the visually impaired and hearing impaired community, like some other citizens of Toronto, are not actively involved in municipal politics. They indicated that improved accessibility to meetings and information could in-

crease their involvement. Many people with hearing impairments have considered applying for employment with the City. There was some concern that most jobs open to them are at the entry level.

The individuals that were interviewed for this study expressed their hope that their input would contribute to positive change in the ways that the City provides information and services to the hearing impaired and visually impaired communities.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine the current programming offered by the City of Toronto and recommend a comprehensive strategy to adapt these programs so that they are more accessible to visually impaired and hearing impaired persons.

After reviewing the information obtained through consultation with members of the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities as well as from City of Toronto departments, it is clear that a number of barriers exist that prevent people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments from fully accessing the services, programs and events provided by the City. These barriers take various forms, including:

- negative public image;
- lack of coordinated access policies and practices;
- lack of staff training on communication;
- absence of special equipment; and
- physical barriers to access (e.g., location of Information Services Section).

The key informants also identified viable options that the City can implement to alleviate the barriers and improve access to information and services. The development of the recommendations put forth in this section was guided by the input from the key informant interviews and was based on the following principles:

- access will be best facilitated by the development and implementation of a strategic access plan;
- access must be coordinated; not piecemeal;
- options must be flexible;
- strategies to improve access must be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis; and
- hearing impaired and visually impaired individuals should be participants in the access strategy.

Another consideration in the formulation of these recommendations was the issue of demand. Many of the services of the City are used infrequently by the majority of citizens in Toronto. For many meetings, events and publications, special access "services" will not be required because the visually impaired and hearing impaired will choose

not to participate. To provide access, "services" such as interpreting or taping on a universal basis (i.e., every meeting and/or publication) is not cost effective. However, for both moral and legal reasons it is important that the hearing impaired and visually impaired communities have equal access. The recommendations in this report are based on the premise that a comprehensive system should provide sufficient resources to facilitate access, in a timely and efficient manner that minimizes the burden placed on the visually impaired or hearing impaired individual. At the same time, it is expected that some specialized services should be available as they are needed or requested.

The lack of information on potential demand presents a problem for estimating the resources required to adequately facilitate access. It is important that the recommendations included in this report be seen only as a starting point to build experience. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the demand for services must occur to ensure that access is maintained adequately.

The costs that are provided for each recommendation are estimates based on consultation with City personnel, suppliers and members of the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities. The actual costs will probably vary depending on demand and on the purchasing process.

The recommendations that are described in the remainder of this section are meant to be parts of a comprehensive access strategy. Each option has merit but will work best as part of a comprehensive system. Implementation of the system should be accompanied by a large scale public relations effort.

A time line of two years is projected for implementation of these initial recommendations. Exhibit VII illustrates the projected time frame for each of the major recommendations.

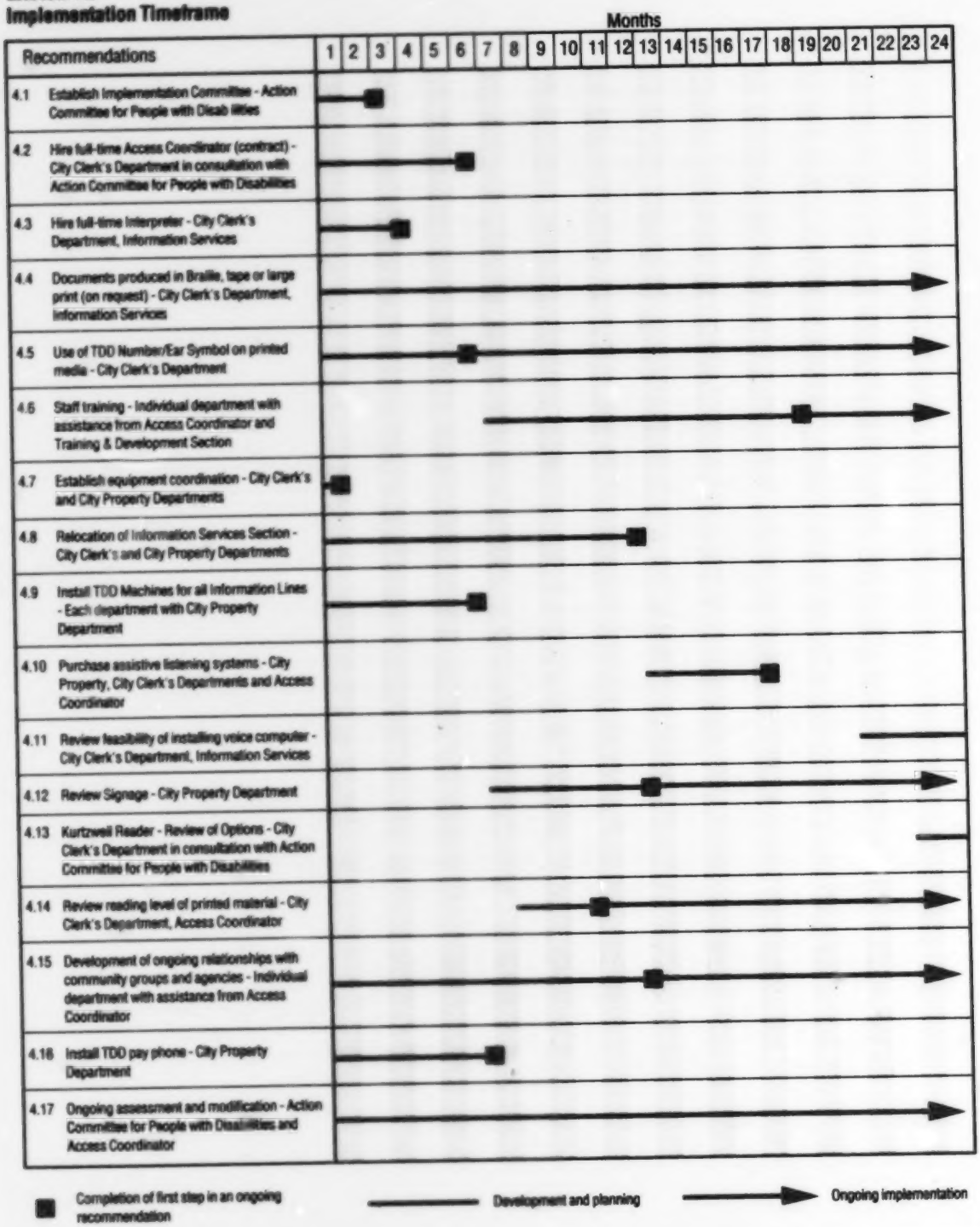
4.1 Establish Implementation Committee

It is recommended that a subcommittee of the Action Committee for People with Disabilities be given the mandate to oversee the implementation of the comprehensive access plan. The mandate should include:

- responsibility for an implementation budget;
- coordination of the implementation of the recommendations;
- ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the system;
- progress reports on a regular basis to the Action Committee for People With Disabilities; and
- communicating the objectives of the access strategy to city employees and to the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities.

Exhibit VII

Implementation Timeframe


Months
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
Recommendations
4.1 Establish Implementation Committee - Action Committee for People with Disabilities
4.2 Hire full-time Access Coordinator (contract) - City Clerk's Department in consultation with Action Committee for People with Disabilities
4.3 Hire full-time Interpreter - City Clerk's Department, Information Services
4.4 Documents produced in Braille, tape or large print (on request) - City Clerk's Department, Information Services
4.5 Use of TDD Number/Ear Symbol on printed media - City Clerk's Department
4.6 Staff training - Individual department with assistance from Access Coordinator and Training & Development Section
4.7 Establish equipment coordination - City Clerk's and City Property Departments
4.8 Relocation of Information Services Section - City Clerk's and City Property Departments
4.9 Install TDD Machines for all Information Lines - Each department with City Property Department
4.10 Purchase assistive listening systems - City Property, City Clerk's Departments and Access Coordinator
4.11 Review feasibility of installing voice computer - City Clerk's Department, Information Services
4.12 Review Signage - City Property Department
4.13 Kurtzweil Reader - Review of Options - City Clerk's Department in consultation with Action Committee for People with Disabilities
4.14 Review reading level of printed material - City Clerk's Department, Access Coordinator
4.15 Development of ongoing relationships with community groups and agencies - Individual department with assistance from Access Coordinator
4.16 Install TDD pay phone - City Property Department
4.17 Ongoing assessment and modification - Action Committee for People with Disabilities and Access Coordinator
Completion of first step in an ongoing recommendation
Development and planning
Ongoing implementation

The implementation subcommittee will be comprised of members of the Policy subcommittee of the ACPD and community resource people.

The implementation committee should meet on at least a monthly basis during the first implementation year.

Responsibility: Action Committee for People with Disabilities

4.2 Hire Full-Time Access Coordinator

Successful implementation of the access system requires the attention of a staff member with the responsibility to assist the implementation committee to carry out its mandate. It is recommended that a full-time person be hired for this position. This individual would work with the implementation committee and individual departments to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations, including:

- the development of ongoing relationships with the hearing impaired and visually impaired communities;
- advising on the purchase and installation of equipment;
- development of training programs; and
- development of terms of reference for review studies.

The successful implementation of the strategic access plan requires this position. The implementation activities, particularly the outreach to the target communities and the work with departments to develop training strategies will be time consuming. The current members of the Action Committee for People with Disabilities already are committed 100 percent of their time to their existing positions. Therefore, to ensure that the necessary tasks are accomplished, a contracted full-time position needs to be created for three years.

The Access Coordinator's major responsibility will be to manage the implementation process. A draft position description is included in Appendix 7.

Responsibility: City Clerk's Department in consultation with the Action Committee for People with Disabilities

4.3 Hire a Full-Time Sign Language Interpreter

The hearing impaired persons consulted during this study expressed concerns about the difficulties they encounter accessing services from the City. A major problem has been obtaining the assistance of a sign language interpreter to help them communicate with City staff.

Deaf individuals have two options available to get interpreting services. They can request the service directly from the Canadian Hearing Society or other organizations that provide interpreters or they can ask the City to hire an interpreter to assist them. In the latter case, the City would also go to the Canadian Hearing Society to contract for interpreting services.

The City has been contracting for interpreting services on a request only basis. Individuals have reported a number of problems with the current system including:

- delays of several weeks until an available interpreter can be found;
- a shortage of trained interpreters;
- a lack of information in the community about how the service works; and
- a lack of awareness among City employees that interpreting services can be arranged.

In many cases, the hearing impaired individual must go to City Hall to request interpreting services at a later date. Individuals report that the current system is both time consuming and cumbersome.

People with hearing impairments encounter problems similar to other cultural groups that do not readily communicate in English. At present the City has on staff translators to improve access for non English speaking residents of Toronto. It is recommended that the City also hire a full-time sign language interpreter to provide services to people with hearing impairments. A full-time interpreter on staff would facilitate access to interpreting services. It would allow people with hearing impairments to avoid long delays and more readily use City services.

The interpreter should be available:

- at set hours for walk-in inquiries;
- by appointment; and
- at public meetings and events (on request).

The individual hired for this position could also assist with staff education (4.6).

The availability of easily accessible interpreting services was a significant concern among the hearing impaired persons consulted. Providing a full-time sign language interpreter position will address this concern. The creation of this position should be accompanied by appropriate publicity to ensure that the community is aware of the new resource.

The demand for these services should be monitored and reviewed annually. A draft position description is included in the appendix.

Responsibility: City Clerk's Department - Information Services

4.4 On Demand Production of Documents in Large Print, Braille or on Tape

Currently, most of the information produced by the City is disseminated in print form. This presents access barriers to people with visual impairments.

Departments reported difficulty in prioritizing printed materials for translation into accessible formats. People with visual impairments expressed a desire for equal access. There is a need for a flexible system which will enhance access to all documents.

It is recommended that documents be made available in large print, braille or audio tape format on a request-only basis. The Information Services Section should be responsible for developing a system to ensure that documents are available in a timely fashion. A "request only" system can minimize costs while providing access to all city documents. This can be further enhanced with the addition of a voice computer (see 4.7).

It is also recommended that a directory of services and frequently used documents be produced in all three formats and made available through Information Services Section as well as through the CNIB, BOOST and other organizations that frequently deal with people with visual impairments. This directory will help patrons to be aware of available documents.

A budget of $10,000 is recommended for the first year. The cost of taping documents is $46 per hour for original documents and $4.60 per additional copy. Brailling costs are estimated at $5 per original brailled page and 35 cents per page for copies. Large print can be produced by the City's printing services. This should be reviewed after the first year of implementation to assess demand. The existence of this service should be advertised to City employees as well as the visually impaired community.

Responsibility: City Clerk's Department - Information Services

4.5 Use TDD Numbers and Ear Symbol Along With Telephone Numbers

At present, the City has an informal policy of placing TDD numbers along with regular enquiry telephone numbers, in advertisements and on brochures. In practice, some documents have a TDD number. It is recommended that a formal policy be implemented to have all printed matter, including letterhead and business cards, that normally require a telephone number to also include the TDD number for the relevant department or for information services. It is also recommended that the International Symbol of Access for the Hearing Impaired be used along with the TDD number. The

symbol should be displayed prominently wherever accommodation has been made to serve members of hearing impaired community through staff training, availability of interpreters, or provision of equipment.

Responsibility: Every Department

4.6 Staff Training

Employees are the most important link between City services and the community. On a daily basis, citizens requiring service interact with employees. These interactions range from simple requests for directions to get around the buildings, to complex inquiries regarding building codes and planning issues. Many of the recommendations in this strategic access plan call for equipment and systems that will help staff to facilitate access for people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments. Staff must be aware of the availability of these resources and know how best to use them to facilitate access.

It is also important to acknowledge that attitudes toward people with visual impairments and/or hearing impairments often create additional obstacles to access. During this study, members of these communities related specific experiences in which visually impaired or hearing impaired persons were treated inappropriately by staff of the City. It appears that in many cases, rude behaviour was the result of staff feeling frustrated about not knowing how to communicate with hearing impaired people. Respondents also indicated problems with general communications, such as giving clear directions, writing in simple clear English and knowledge of City resources to facilitate access.

To improve access, it is important to provide staff with the skills to communicate with people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments and to address negative attitudes. It is impractical to provide training to all employees of the City. A more effective approach is to focus on the approximately, 1,340 front line staff who have the most frequent contact with the public. Exhibit VIII indicates an appropriate number of personnel by department who will require training.

The goals of the training are to provide staff with the skills to effectively interact with visually impaired and hearing impaired patrons. Specific objectives of the training should include:

- increase staff awareness of the needs of the visually impaired and hearing impaired;
- teach staff communication strategies;
- teach staff about the strategic access plan;
- inform staff about the resources available to assist them to facilitate access;
- educate staff on their responsibilities to increase access; and
- inform staff about the legal requirements to provide access.

Exhibit VIII
Front Line Training Needs by Department

Buildings and Inspection Department including Building Inspectors, Plan Examiners and general clerical and reception staff.	200
City Property including security staff and forepersons (in recreation centres).	25
Department of the City Clerk including staff of the Information and Communication Services Section, Legislative Services (marriage licences, elections, etc.), Records & Archives, Council support staff and general clerical and reception staff.	150
Department of Public Health includes Public Health Nurses, Health Inspectors, Dental Hygienists, Dental Assistants, area office staff, etc.	500
Department of Public Works includes Inspectors, Street Allowance and Permit Parking staff and general clerical and reception staff.	115
Finance including telephone clerks, counter clerks, cashiers and arrears collection officers (deal entirely with business people).	19
Fire including fire dispatchers, information officers, fire prevention officers and inspectors.	50
Housing including counter staff, superintendents and property managers.	144
Legal including collection clerks, claims investigators and receptionists.	11
Management Services including receptionists (Admin. Div.); receptionists (Personnel).	14
Parks and Recreation including recreation instructors, recreation coordinators, permit clerks, receptionists and forestry clerks.	84
Planning and Development including receptionists.	15
Purchasing and Supply including receptionists.	5
Total	**1,332**

Effective training must account for variations in the activities of each department and for the effect of organizational culture on employee behaviour. Training of personnel at front counter positions will not improve access unless each department supports the concept of "enhanced accessibility" for people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments.

It is recommended that the City purchase existing training programs that are developed and delivered by agencies that serve the hearing impaired and visually impaired communities. These training programs should be reviewed and assessed by the Access Coordinator, City Training and Development consultants and department representatives.

The Access Coordinator should work with a Training and Development consultant in each department to identify the training needs and priorities of all departments. These priorities and needs, the training strategy and the implementation of policies and procedures should be endorsed by Department Heads and passed through the management structure.

Responsibility: Individual departments with assistance of Access Coordinator and Training and Development Section (Management Services Department.)

4.7 Establish Equipment Coordination

A. Most departments in the City will not require specialized equipment such as a Kurtzweil reader (4.8) or portable assistive listening systems (4.13) on a daily basis. It will be more cost effective to have specialized equipment available, on request, from a central source. It is recommended that the City Property Department be assigned the responsibility for developing, monitoring and coordinating a reservation system for the assistive listening systems (4.13). It is also recommended that all requests for printed materials in alternative formats (4.6) be handled through the Information Services Section, Department of the City Clerk.

Responsibility: City Property Department

B. Specialized equipment such as a voice computer (4.7) and a Kurtzweil reader (4.8) should be housed in the Information Services Section and available to staff and the public to access documents. The cost of the equipment is described in sections 4.6, 4.8 and 4.13.

Responsibility: City Clerk's Department - Information Services

4.8 Relocation of the Information Services Section

At present, the Information Services Section is located toward the back of the rotunda by the east elevators. The individuals that were interviewed during the study reported that the Information office was very difficult to find. They also reported that the Security Desk personnel were not properly prepared to provide information services. Consequently, many patrons had difficulty obtaining information or finding their way around City Hall.

It is recommended that the Information Services Section of the Department of the City Clerk be relocated to the front of the rotunda where the services would be readily available upon entering the building, and that the City Property Department give priority to this relocation.

Responsibility: City Clerk's and City Property Departments

4.9 Install TDDs for all Enquiry Lines

City departments have most of their contact with the public over the telephone. At the time of this study, only five TDDs are in service. These are in:

- Information Services Section, Department of City Clerk;
- Tax and Water Branch, Finance Department;
- Operations Section, Public Works Department;
- Personnel Services Division, Management Services Department;
- City Property Department.

There are at least 14 public enquiry lines offering information ranging from animal control to zoning information. It is recommended that all of these public enquiry lines have a parallel TDD line. TDDs with appropriate features cost $660 per unit. The total estimated cost to equip all enquiry lines not currently equipped with a TDD unit would be $8,580.

In addition to training on the technical use of the TDDs, it is essential to provide staff training on the use of language and TDD etiquette to ensure that access is maximized. The Canadian Hearing Society is prepared to provide such training at a reasonable cost.

Responsibility: Each department with assistance of City Property Department

4.10 Purchase Wireless Sound Transmission Systems

The term "hearing impairment" represents a wide range of impairments. There are many hearing impaired individuals who have some hearing that require assistive listening devices to properly participate in public meetings and events. They can also benefit from these devices during one-on-one meetings.

There are four kinds of wireless sound transmission systems available. The FM (frequency modulation) systems basically consist of a transmitter worn by the speaker and a receiver worn by the hearing impaired individual. The speaker's voice is transmitted directly into the ear piece worn by the hearing impaired person. The voice is free of ambient noise and therefore easier to understand.

It is recommended that portable FM systems be purchased that can be used in a variety of settings, in order to facilitate access to public meetings and events as well as to individual communications. The initial purchase of equipment should be limited until the demand for the system is tested. The purchase should include one theatre size transmitter for use in the Council chambers and in public meeting rooms, one smaller transmitter for use in one-on-one conversations and a total of ten receivers. A charging unit for the battery operated receivers will also be required. Total cost is estimated at $9450. At the end of the first year of operation, the need for additional units should be assessed.

Responsibility: City Property and City Clerk's Department with assistance of Access Coordinator

4.11 Review of Feasibility of Installing Voice Computer

Most documents produced by City departments and committees are prepared and stored in a mainframe computer. It is technically possible to develop a system that will enable visually impaired individuals to access any public document that is available on the City's computer system.

Agencies such as Designing Aids for Disabled Adults (DADA) are able to consult and advise on the technology of such a system.

It is recommended that the City of Toronto conduct a feasibility assessment on the installation and operation of a voice computer system that can be accessed by telephone and/or in person.

This assessment should be conducted and a report submitted to City Council within six months by the Management Services Department.

Responsibility: Management Services Department, CISD

4.12 Review Wayfinding and Signage Systems

Almost all of the visually impaired and hearing impaired respondents noted the lack of adequate signage at City Hall. This problem is compounded by the physical structure of the building which can be disorienting due to its circular floor plan. A system of wayfinding could be introduced which eliminates existing barriers and adds visual and tactile cues to improve orientation. It is recommended that a study be conducted by the City Property Department to review and improve wayfinding and signage systems in City buildings.

Responsibility: City Property Department

4.13 Install a Kurtzweil Reader

A Kurtzweil reading machine allows a visually impaired person to scan and listen to a printed document. The advantage of this technology is the flexibility of being able to read any document. The disadvantage is that the user would have to come down to City Hall to access the machine. It is recommended that the City purchase a unit only if the voice computer and on demand brailling, large print or taping does not adequately meet the demand for service. The cost of a unit is estimated at $12,000.

Responsibility: City Clerk's Department in consultation with the Action Committee for People with Disabilities

4.14 Review Reading Level of Printed Material

The hearing impaired persons that were consulted during the study noted that many of the brochures and advertisements produced by the City were written at a language level difficult for them to read.

The implementation subcommittee will review the City's publications and identify materials that might be rewritten in a simpler language.

Responsibility: Action Committee for Persons with Disabilities with Access Coordinator and Departments

4.15 Development of Ongoing Relationships With Community Groups and Agencies

The visually impaired and hearing impaired communities stated that providing information to organizations like the Canadian Hearing Society or the CNIB is an effective way to increase awareness about City services and events. It is recommended that the implementation coordinator assist departments to develop ongoing relationships with groups that represent the target communities. Maintaining ongoing relationships will also facilitate monitoring of the effectiveness of the comprehensive access plan. Activities that should be developed on an ongoing basis include:

- publicize the new initiatives;
- regular meetings with key organizations;
- dissemination of information to groups representing the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities;

- an open house for people with hearing impairments and/or visual impairments; and
- semi-annual meetings to solicit feedback on the effectiveness of the access system.

Responsibility: Individual departments with assistance from Access Coordinator

4.16 Install TDD Pay Telephone

Hearing impaired individuals visiting City Hall cannot use public pay phones to make telephone calls. A TDD pay telephone is available at a cost of just under $2,500. The device is vandal proof and can also be used by non-hearing impaired people. (The TDD pay phone was developed in the United States, therefore, compatibility with our Canadian phone system needs to be examined.) It is recommended that a TDD pay phone be installed in the main lobby of City Hall. If the device is frequently used, then installation in other public locations should be considered.

Responsibility: City Property Department

4.17 Ongoing Assessment and Modification

The implementation of the comprehensive access plan should not be considered only at one point in time. The system should be monitored and assessed on an ongoing basis. Modifications should be made to the system as it develops.

Responsibility: Action Committee for People with Disabilities and Access Coordinator

Exhibit IX
Estimated Costs*

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Access Coordinator (4.2)	$44,500	$44,500	$44,500
Full-Time Sign Language Interpreter (4.3)	$44,500	$44,500	$44,500
Documents Produced in Braille Tape or Large Print (4.4)	$10,000	re-assess yearly	re-assess yearly
Staff Training (4.6)	$8,000	$19,800	$19,800
Install TDDs for all Information Lines (4.9)	$8,580	re-assess yearly	re-assess yearly
Purchase Assistive Listening Systems (4.10)	$9,450	re-assess yearly	re-assess yearly
Review Signage (4.12)	$20,000 study	access signage $5,000	$5,000
Kurtzweil Reader (4.13)		$12,000 (optional)	maintenance
Review Reading Level of Printed Material (4.14)	$20,000		
Install TDD Pay Phone (4.16)	$2,500	maintenance	maintenance
TOTALS	$167,530	$125,800	$113,800

*** Based on 1990 salary levels. 1991 and 1992 wage increases were not included.**

Estimated Costs

Estimated costs associated with each recommendation are included in Exhibit IX. Many of the recommendations will require some commitment of staff time. Wherever possible, costs have been estimated for the recommendations. In many cases, potential suppliers were only able to provide approximate price ranges for equipment. Final costs will be affected by demand and timing.

5.1 Priorities

In order of priority, the recommendations should be implemented as follows:

1. Establish Implementation Committee;
2. Hire full-time Access Coordinator (3-year contract);
3. Hire full-time sign language interpreter;
4. Translation of documents as requested;
5. Purchase of TDD;
6. Use of TDD number/ear symbol on printed media;
7. Employee training;
8. Establish equipment coordination;
9. Relocation of Information Services Section;
10. Purchase of assistive listening systems;
11. Installation of a voice computer;
12. Review of wayfinding and signage;
13. Acquisition of Kurtzweiler reader; and
14. Review of printed material for appropriate reading level.

Appendix 1

City Hall Departments Consulted

City Property Department

Committee of Adjustment

Department of the City Clerk

- Information and Communication Service Division

Fire Department

Housing Department

Management Services Department

- Personnel Services Division
- Equal Opportunity Division

Parks and Recreation Department

Planning and Development Department

Public Health Department

Public Works Department

Appendix 2

Documents sent for Brailling and Taping

Access to Municipal Information and Services for People with Hearing and/or Visual Impairments.

City Service Stops Drafts Cold

Need Help? - Property Owners

Termites - The Uninvited Guests

Adequate Heat

A Downtowner's Guide to Public Health Services

AIDS Let's Talk

Answers About AIDS

Room to Spare?

Guide to Toronto's Housing Standards

Directory Review Guidelines for a Barrier Free Environment

Toronto A City That Works

Telephone Directory - City Hall

List of Members of Council, 1987

Recreation In Toronto: A Game Plan for the '80's

Sexual Harassment - Information for Employees

Goals and Timetables Implementation Process 1987-1990 Action Plan

The Planning and Development Department - An Overview

Directory of Services

Appendix 3

Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired Organizations Represented in the Interviews

Hearing Impaired

- Sign Language Program Sheridan College
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Silent Voice of Canada Inc.
- Toronto Hard of Hearing Association
- Canadian Co-ordinating Council on Deafness
- Ontario Board of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
- Ontario Association of the Deaf
- Fraternal Society of the Deaf
- Ontario Interpreting Service
- Ontario Bible Club for the Deaf
- Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf
- Deaf Theatre Group
- Ontario Deaf Sports Association
- North York Deaf Artisans
- Voice for Hearing Impaired Children
- Canadian Hearing Impaired Youth Association
- Saturday Night Club (Youth Group for Deaf)
- Metro Toronto School for the Deaf
- Toronto Association of the Deaf
- Canadian Captioning Development Agency
- Deaf Children's Society
- CANCAP
- Association of Late Deafened Adults
- St. Francis de Salis Society

Visually Impaired

- Canadian National Institute For the Blind (CNIB)
- Blind Organizations of Ontario with Self Help Tactics (BOOST)
- Periodical Audio Library (PAL)
- Blind Adults Learning About Normal Community Environment (BALANCE)
- Ski Hawks Club
- Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped (ARCH)

Appendix 4

Questionnaires used with the Hearing Impaired Population

Interview Protocol – Hearing Impaired Persons

Name: _____

Organization: _____ Area of City: _____

Knowledge/Use of City Services

1. Do you think a hearing impaired person would need to use these City services? Check (√) those services.
   - ☐ services for animals (Toronto Humane Society & Animal Control Services)
   - ☐ building inspections and property maintenance
   - ☐ financial aid for homeowners (home improvement programs)
   - ☐ garbage services
   - ☐ public health services (immunization, nutrition, disease prevention, health counselling)
   - ☐ information services
   - ☐ housing and accommodation information
   - ☐ equal opportunity programs
   - ☐ marriage, births, deaths registration
   - ☐ parks, culture, and recreation
   - ☐ planning and development
   - ☐ public nuisances
   - ☐ roads, traffic and automobiles (local streets and sidewalks)
   - ☐ services for children (workplace daycare, child health, recreation)
   - ☐ services for the disabled
   - ☐ services for senior citizens
   - ☐ social services
   - ☐ taxes (municipal)
   - ☐ transportation
   - ☐ water
   - ☐ emergency services

2. Which of these services are the most important services to have access to?

   1st Choice _____ 3rd Choice _____

   2nd Choice _____ 4th Choice _____

3. In your opinion, what services are presently accessible?

4. In your opinion, what kinds of problems do hearing impaired persons encounter when they try to get access to services at Toronto City Hall, (or any public services, or government services)?

5. How do hearing impaired people find out about these services or programs from City Hall?

6. If hearing impaired persons want information about a specific service, how would they get it?

7. What are the best ways for increasing the awareness of city services in the hearing impaired population?

8. What are the best ways and best locations for distributing information produced by the city?

9. What services or programs for the hearing impaired would you like to have added at City Hall or at City facilities in your area?

10. Please tell us about any information or access programs that are working successfully in other cities, or in other areas.

11. How are the hearing impaired involved in city politics?

12. How can access to the political process be improved, e.g. regarding council meetings, voting, or agendas for meetings, etc.?

Environmental Access

13. What problems do hearing impaired people have, in finding their way in City facilities, or in public buildings?

14. Please explain if there are any problems getting to City Hall.

15. Please explain if there are any problems getting into the City Hall building.

16. What could be done to improve finding your way at City Hall?

Information Access

17. How do most hearing impaired persons get information about public services?

18. What technical aids are available to make it easier to obtain information and access?

19. What is the role of your organization?

20. What services could your organization provide to make it easier to obtain information or access to City Hall?

21. What other services are available from other sources to make access easier?

Attitudes

22. When trying to get information, what attitude problems do hearing impaired people have to face?

23. What effect does a hearing disability have on the people providing the information or the services?

24. What should people at City Hall be aware of when helping hearing impaired people?

Employment

25. Have you ever thought about applying for a job at City Hall (if you applied, what happened)?

26. How do hearing impaired people find out about job openings at City Hall, or other places?

27. What problems do hearing impaired people face when they apply for a job?

28. What can City Hall do to increase the possibility of hearing impaired people getting a job with the City?

29. Does it make a difference to you that the City of Toronto advertises itself as an equal opportunity employer?

30. What is your reaction when you see the international symbol for disabled access on a job ad?

Appendix 5

Questionnaires used with the Visually Impaired Population

Interview Protocol – Visually Impaired Persons

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Knowledge/Use of City Hall Services

1. Do you think a visually impaired person would need to use these City Hall services? Check (√) those services.
   - ☐ services for animals
   - ☐ building and property maintenance
   - ☐ financial aid for homeowners
   - ☐ garbage services
   - ☐ health services
   - ☐ information and research services
   - ☐ housing and accommodation information
   - ☐ legal and human rights information
   - ☐ marriage, births, deaths registration
   - ☐ parks, culture, and recreation
   - ☐ planning and development
   - ☐ public nuisances
   - ☐ roads, traffic and automobiles
   - ☐ services for children
   - ☐ services for the disabled
   - ☐ services for senior citizens
   - ☐ social services
   - ☐ taxes (municipal)
   - ☐ transportation
   - ☐ water
   - ☐ emergency services

2. Which of these services are the most important services to have access to?

   1st Choice _____ 3rd Choice _____

   2nd Choice _____ 4th Choice _____

3. In your opinion, what services are presently accessible?

4. In your opinion, what kinds of problems do visually impaired persons encounter when they try to get access to services at Toronto City Hall, (or any public services, or government services)?

5. How do visually impaired people find out about these services or programs from City Hall?

6. If visually impaired persons want information about a specific service, how would they get it?

7. What are the best ways for increasing the awareness of city services in the visually impaired population?

8. What are the best ways and best locations for distributing information produced by the city?

9. What services or programs for the visually impaired would you like to have added at City Hall?

10. Please tell us about any information or access programs that are working successfully in other cities, or in other areas.

11. How are the visually impaired involved in city politics?

12. How can access to the political process be improved, e.g. regarding council meetings, voting, or agendas for meetings, etc.?

Environmental Access

13. What problems do visually impaired people have, in finding their way in City Hall, or in public buildings?

14. What could be done to improve finding your way at City Hall?

15. Please explain if there are any problems getting to City Hall.

16. Please explain if there are any problems getting into the City Hall building.

Information Access

17. How do most visually impaired persons read information about public services?

18. What technical aids are available to make it easier to obtain information and access?

19. What is the role of your organization?

20. What services could your organization provide to make it easier to obtain information or access to City Hall?

21. What other services are available from other sources to make access easier?

Attitudes

22. When trying to get information, what attitude problems do visually impaired people have to face?

23. What effect does a visual disability have on the people providing the information or the services?

24. What should people at City Hall be aware of when helping visually impaired people?

Employment

25. Have you ever thought about applying for a job at City Hall?

26. How do visually impaired people find out about job openings at City Hall, or other places?

27. What problems do visually impaired people face when they apply for a job?

28. What can City Hall do to increase the possibility of visually impaired people getting a job with the City?

Appendix 6

Interview Protocol – City Hall Departments and Services

1. Name of respondent, position, department or service.

2. What is the role and/or mandate of your department/service?

3. What are the services you currently provide to the general public?

4. How do you inform the public about your services, e.g. brochures, adverts?

5. How do people access your services, e.g. telephone, letters, in person?

6. What types of problems do people have obtaining information and accessing your services?

7. What type of special problems do hearing and visually impaired individuals have in obtaining information from your department and in accessing your services?

8. Of the services that you provide, which are most important for visually and hearing impaired persons to access? What are the key pieces of information that need to be adapted for accessibility?

9. Do you have any special devices or information materials (TDD, braille or taped materials) that facilitate communication with visually and hearing impaired persons? Any plans to purchase or develop materials or equipment?

10. Do you have anyone on staff with any special expertise in communicating with the impaired, e.g., sign language skills?

11. What facilities, equipment, staff, and/or materials are available at City Hall to help you communicate with these customers? Are you aware of services outside of City Hall that you can use to assist you to communicate?

12. What kind of problems do visually and hearing impaired persons have in getting around the building? Are there specific problems associated with the location of your service? Do you have any specific suggestions on improvement?

13. What kind of programs should City Hall initiate/offer to ensure that visually and hearing impaired persons have access to city services? What role would you like to see your department/service play in this initiative? Specifically, what actions should your department initiate to ensure that information about and access to services is available to hearing and visually impaired persons? Short and long term options?

14. What sources of funding are available within your department or within other departments to fund the purchase of special equipment or the development of materials?

15. What should the city do to improve access to the political process for hearing and visually impaired citizens?

16. Are you aware of any innovative measures used in other jurisdictions?

17. Do you have any visually or hearing impaired employees?

18. Are there hearing or visually impaired individuals on any boards or committees in your department or in City Hall?

19. Who else would you suggest we talk to at City Hall?

** These questions will be adapted for interviews with other jurisdictions and with technology experts.

Appendix 7

Access Coordinator Position Description

Department of City Clerk

Action Committee for People with Disabilities

(Contract)

Work Illustration:

This employee, reporting to the Coordinator, Information Services, Department of the City Clerk is responsible for coordinating the implementation of recommendations to increase accessibility of visually impaired and hearing impaired persons to City of Toronto services, facilities and information.

She/he works with City Departments to implement a strategic plan for improving access for visually impaired and hearing impaired persons; provides technical assistance regarding the installation and use of special aids and equipment; advises on the development of staff training programs; recommends communication strategies for making public meetings, City publications and documents accessible; promotes City employees' awareness of appropriate methods for serving visually impaired and hearing impaired persons.

She/he works with an implementation committee which monitors and advises on the status of recommendations; does outreach to the visually impaired and hearing impaired communities to inform them of City initiatives and to obtain their input; contacts service agencies and invites their involvement with the City's program; designs and organizes public education events to promote accessibility for visually impaired and hearing impaired persons.

Qualifications:

Knowledge and experience in the provision of services to visually impaired and/or hearing impaired persons. Experience with committee work in the public or voluntary sector. Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. An understanding of accessibility issues affecting people with disabilities. Knowledge of technical aids and equipment that facilitate accessibility. Contacts with agencies and industries that serve people with visual impairments or hearing impairments.

Minimum Educational Requirements:

Post-secondary education in the social sciences, social work or a related discipline, and/or approved equivalent in related experience.